IV. REMARKS

The Examiner has objected to the drawings. Appended hereto are replacement drawings incorporating amendments overcoming the Examiner's objections. Also attached hereto are annotated sheets indicating the amendments made to the drawings. Further, the annotated sheets indicate that the drawings show (see Fig. 3) the exterior partial S shaped cutout called for in claim 7. (It is noted that a similar objection was previously addressed in Applicants' response of 11/3/03).

The Examiner has objected to the specification under 35 U.S.C. 132. The specification has been amended to overcome the objection. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner has objected to claim 5. Claim 5 has been amended to overcome the objection.

Claims 1, 10 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, 1st paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Applicant respectfully disagrees. Claim 1 recites that when mounted to the holder, the cassette reducer effects a reduction in the substrate holder enabling the holder to hold another substrate smaller than the predetermined size. This feature is described on page 3, second paragraph, lines 17-18, which state "[w]hen the cassette reducer 20 is placed (in the direction indicated by arrow 52S in Fig. 1) in the FOUP…". Further, on page 4, lines 23-26 of the instant specification it is stated that "the cassette reducer 20 fits inside the FOUP of Fig. 1. In one embodiment, the FOUP is designed to hold 300mm diameter semiconductor wafers and the cassette reducer 20 holds 200 mm diameter semiconductor wafers." Thus, the specification, as originally filed, describes a cassette reducer capable of holding 200 mm wafers, that can be placed in a FOUP capable of

holding 300mm wafers. Moreover, one skilled in the art would recognize that it is inherent (i.e. it necessarily arises from the configuration) that a FOUP designed for 300 mm wafers, cannot necessarily hold 200mm wafers but would allow positioning/placement of 200mm wafers inside the FOUP onto the cassette reducer 20 inside the FOUP, in order for the 200 mm wafers to be held by the cassette reducer thereon. It is further inherent that 200mm wafers held by the cassette reducer placed inside the FOUP are also held by the FOUP. Hence, the Applicant submits that the description in the specification as originally filed would reasonably convey to one skilled in the art that the Applicant had possession of the inventive features called for in claim 1 at the time the application was filed. The rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph should be withdrawn.

Claim 10 calls for a resiliently flexible retention member. On page 2, lines 16-17, the specification states "retention springs"; and on lines 23-24, it is stated that "when the cassette reducer is placed in the FOUP, the retention springs 38 grab…". Clearly (because by definition a spring is both resilient and flexible, i.e. a spring must spring back), the description of a "retention spring" in the Specification would reasonably convey to one skilled in the art that the Applicant had possession of the inventive features (resiliently flexible retention member) called for in claim 10 at the time the application was filed. The rejection of claim 10 should be withdrawn. Claim 14 has been amended to overcome the rejection.

Claims 1, 4, 9, 11-12 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Claims 1, 4, 11-12 and 18 have been amended to overcome the rejection. Claim 9 is

definite under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph because one skilled in the art would clearly understand the meaning and scope of the language in the claim when reading the claim in light of the specification and drawings. Claim 9 recites that the pair of columns have at least two positions. On page 4, lines 17-19, the specification states that columns 26, 28 have a first position 56 and a second position 58. This is clearly shown in Fig. 3. Hence, one skilled in the art would clearly understand the meaning and scope of the language in claim 9. The rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-6, 8-15 and 17-18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being obvious over Fosnight in view of Schulte.

Claim 1 calls for a cassette reducer. Neither Fosnight nor Schulte disclose or suggest the features called for in claim 1. Fosnight has been addressed at length in Applicant's prior amendments (mailed 11/3/03 and 9/7/04) the arguments of which are incorporated by reference herein. As noted before, Fosnight makes the bare disclosure of a cassette 22 capable of being housed in a pod shell 21. As has been also stated before, there is a structural difference between a cassette (such as cassette 22 in Fosnight) and a cassette reducer such as called for in claim 1. The structural differences means that a cassette and cassette reducer are two very different things. The structural differences between a cassette and cassette reducer, are those structural features (such as for example retention members that allow snap in/snap out mounting, and supports accommodating smaller size substrates) that allow the cassette reducer to be removably mounted to a substrate holder or pod that is otherwise capable of holding (or incorporates a substrate cassette) capable of holding substrates of a given size (e.g. 300 mm), to

reduce the substrate holder enabling it to hold smaller substrates than the holder is otherwise capable of holding. The aforementioned differences are merely exemplary of the kinds of differences that distinguish and make a cassette reducer mean something different from a cassette as otherwise disclosed in Fosnight. At the very least a bare cassette as disclosed in Fosnight cannot be both cassette and cassette reducer. The bare disclosure of a removable substrate holding cassette, such as in Fosnight, does not make that cassette into a cassette reducer for a substrate holder. Similarly, Schulte also fails to make any disclosure or suggestion whatsoever of a cassette reducer for a substrate holder as called for in claim 1. Schulte merely discloses a carrier 11 capable of holding substrates. The carrier 11 can be lifted and placed on a surface 42 (that causes movable flaps 33 on cammed shaft 27 to move between an open position and blocking position). Thus, like Fosnight, Schulte merely discloses the carrier or cassette itself, but that says nothing about a cassette reducer for reducing a substrate holder as called for in claim 1.

Claim 1 further recites that when mounted to the holder, the cassette reducer effects a reduction in the substrate holder enabling the holder to hold a substrate smaller than a predetermined size. Neither Fosnight, nor Schulte make absolutely any hint of such features. The cassette 22 in Fosnight, when mounted into pod shell 21 makes the pod capable of holding substrates of a predetermined size. Similarly the carrier 11 in Schulte is capable of holding substrates of a given size. However, nothing more than a cassette/pod 22, 21 (or carrier 11) capable of holding substrates of a given size is disclosed. Neither Fosnight, nor Schulte disclose or suggest that the cassette 22 when mounted into pod 21 (or carrier 11) or

any other item when mounted to either the cassette 22, pod 21 (or carrier 11) effect a reduction in the substrate holder enabling the holder to hold a smaller substrate than the predetermined size (of substrates the holder is otherwise capable of holding). As stated before, a cassette 22 (Fosnight), and carrier 11 (Schulte), capable but of holding substrates of a given size, are not in and as of themselves capable of effecting a reduction in the substrate holder enabling the holder to hold smaller substrates than the given size. As neither Fosnight, nor Schulte disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 1, then the combination of Fosnight and Schulte cannot provide features that are not disclosed or suggested in either reference. Claims 1-9 are patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 10 calls for the resiliently flexible retention member projecting outward beyond the lateral peripheral edge of the at least one of the first substantially U-shaped plate or the second substantially U-shaped plate. Fosnight and Schulte fail to disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 10. Fosnight apparently does not disclose any kind of resiliently flexible retention member. The Examiner appears to agree with this on page 7 of the instant Action. Schulte, however fails to correct the deficiency in Fosnight. As noted before, the carrier 11 in Schulte has spring loaded stop members 29. The stop members 29 comprise a mid-flag portion 33 with top 31 and bottom shaft portions 35. The top portion 31 is located inside cap 23 that is attached to the carrier itself. A spring 41 biases the shaft down so that the bottom portion 35 projects from the bottom of the carrier (see Fig. 4) when the carrier is carried. When the carrier 11 is seated on a flat surface 42, the bottom portion 35 of the shaft is pressed into the bottom of

the carrier, causing top portion 31 to move upwards inside cap 23. As shown in Figs. 5-6, upward movement of top portion 31 in cap 23 causes camming of the flag shaft (i.e. cam groove 37 in cap 23 cams pin 39 on top portion 31 of flag pin) thereby rotating the flag 23 (outward) from blocking to unblocking portions (see also col. 3, lines 26-30). Clearly thus, the spring loaded stop members 29 do not retain the carrier in any way, and are not resiliently flexible retention members, much less resiliently flexible retention members projecting outward beyond the lateral peripheral edge of the at least one of the first or second substantially U-shaped plates, as otherwise called for in claim 10. Neither Fosnight, nor Schulte disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 10. Hence, the combination of Fosnight and Schulte cannot provide features that are not disclosed or suggested in either reference. Claims 10-13 are patentable over the cited prior art and should be allowed.

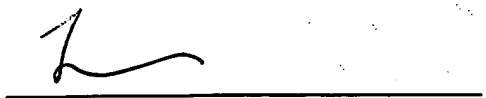
Claim 14 recites that the first substantially U-shaped plate has a retention spring projecting beyond an outer lateral edge of the U-shaped plate for engaging a surface of the substrate holder when the semiconductor cassette reducer is mounted to the substrate holder. These features are not disclosed or suggested in either Fosnight or Schulte. As noted before, Fosnight fails to disclose or suggest a spring loaded retention member. Schulte, as stated before also fails to disclose a retention spring, spring 41 merely biasing the flag shaft 33 down, but in no way serving to retain anything. Further, as seen in Figures 2, and 4-6, all of spring 41 is located below the top surface of carrier 11, and clearly fails to project outward from an outer edge of the U-shaped plate. Nor does spring 41 engage a surface of a substrate holder when the carrier 11 is mounted to the

substrate holder as also called for in claim 14. As neither Fosnight nor Schulte disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 14, then the combination of Fosnight and Schulte cannot possibly provide features that are not disclosed or suggested in either reference. Claims 14-15 and 17-18 are patentable over the cited prior art and should be allowed.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record, and are in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

The Applicant(s) herewith petitions the Commissioner of Patents to extend the time for response to the Office Action by one month to 4/29/05. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment for any fees associated with this communication or credit any over payment to Deposit Account No. 16-1350.

Respectfully submitted,



4/28/05

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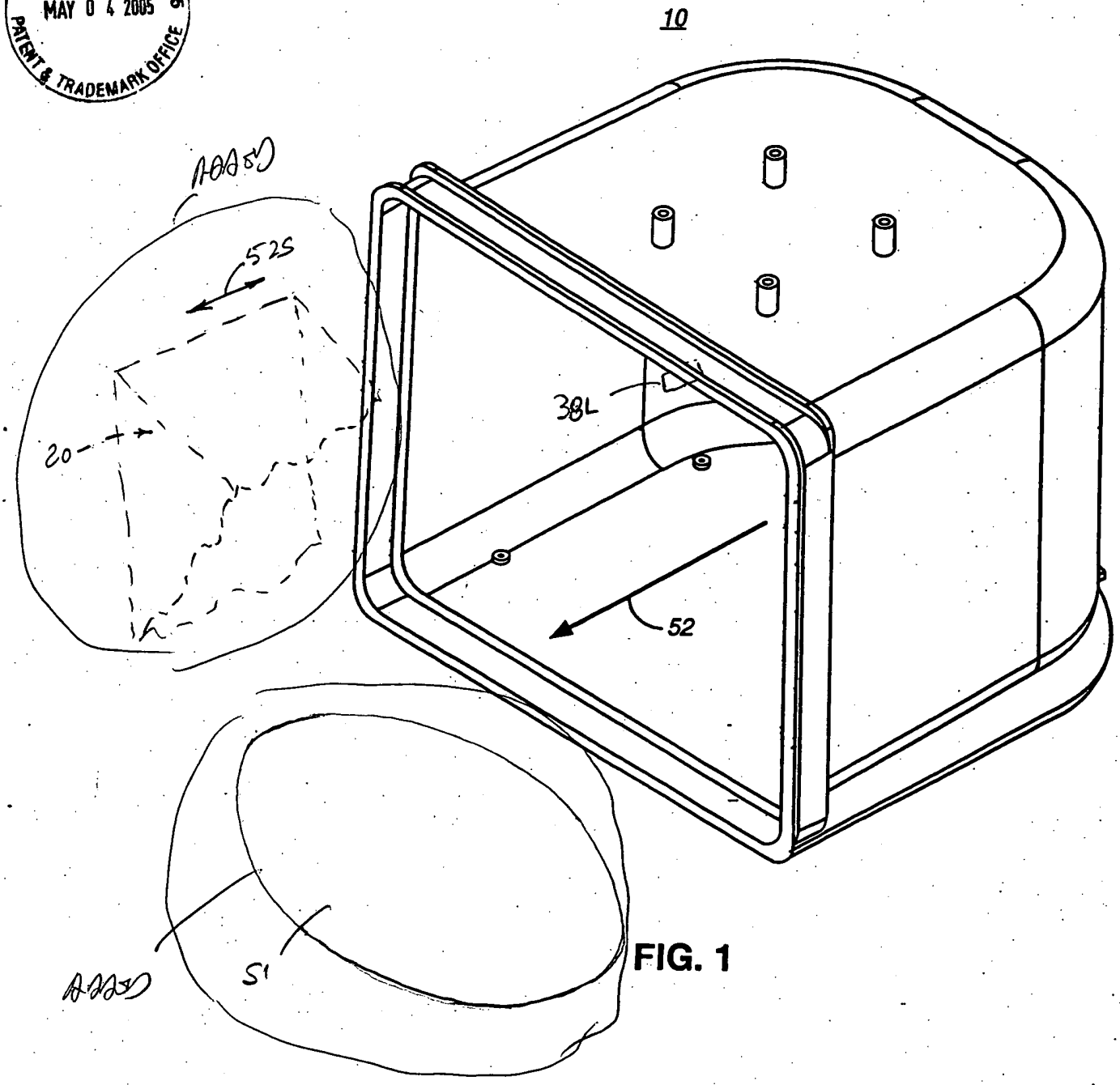

FIG. 1

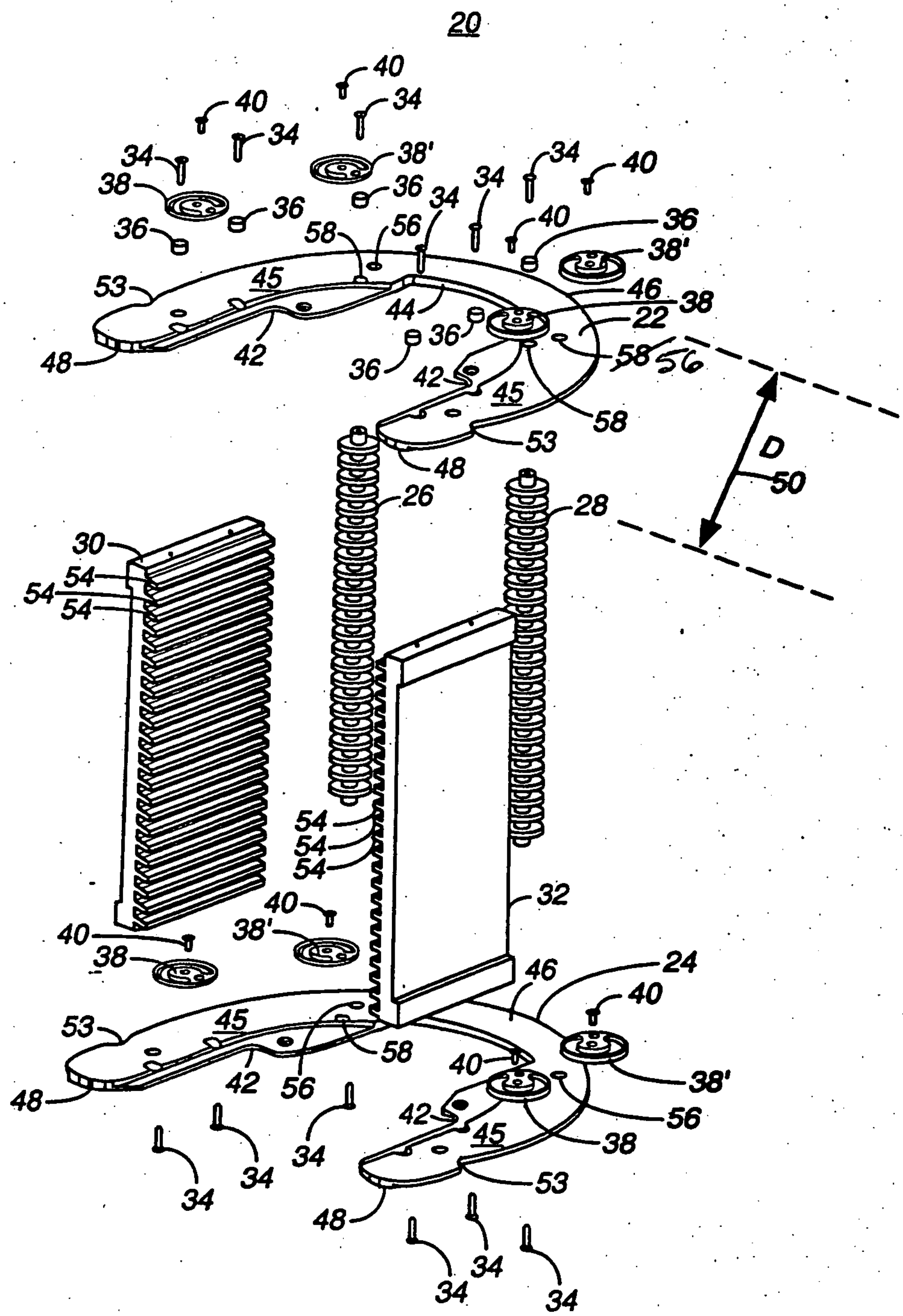

FIG. 2

ANNOTATED SHEETS

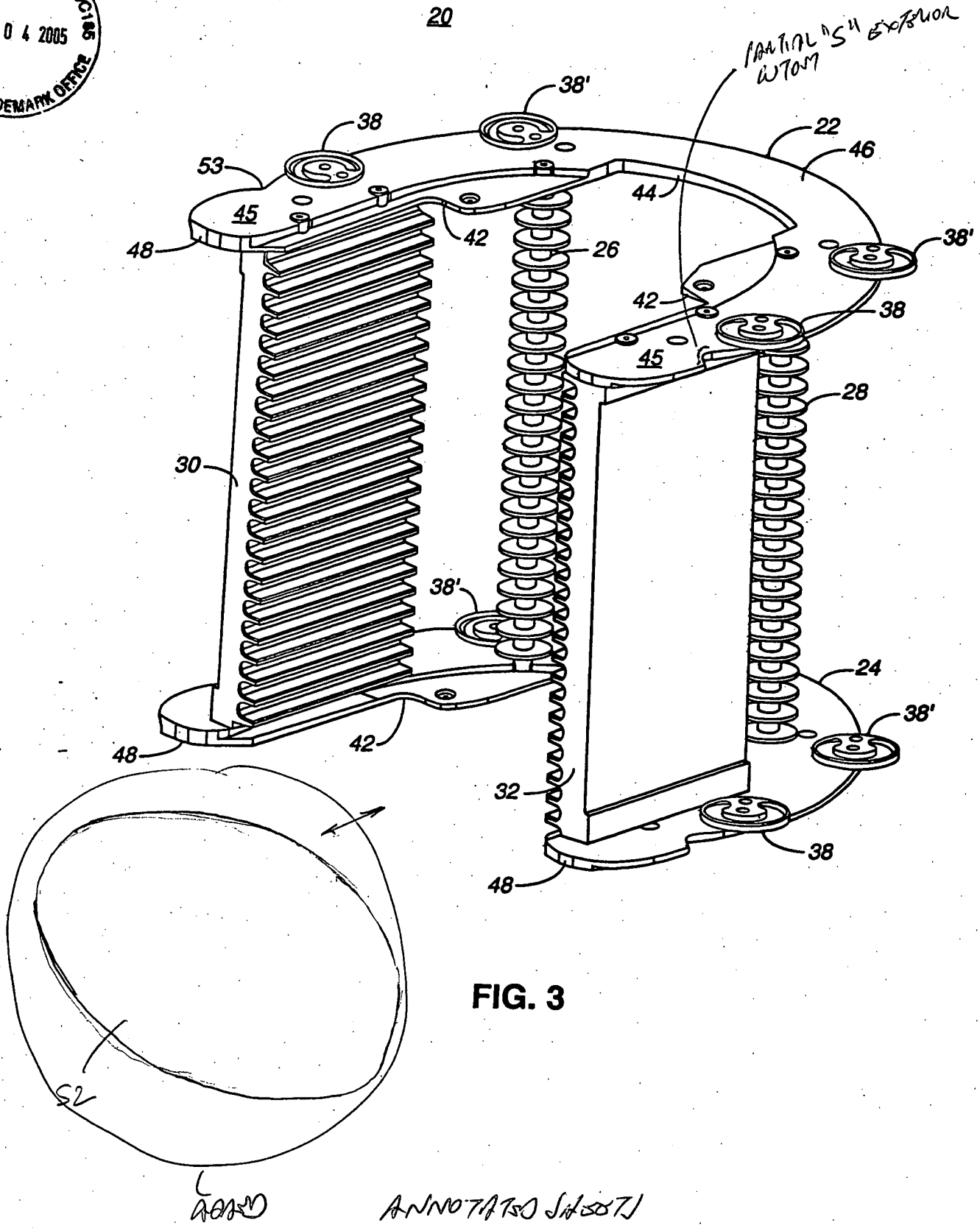

FIG. 3